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ABSTRACT

In order to study the influence of need for orientation and media gratifications on media use and media effects in political communication, two previous surveys were studied to compare the causal modeling approach and the contingent conditions approach. In the first study, 339 personal interviews were conducted with registered voters during a congressional campaign, and in the second, supplemented by newspaper and television content analysis, 135 registered voters from three diverse communities were interviewed during the 1976 presidential campaign. Measures of need for orientation about politics, political media gratifications, media use for political information, and frequency of political discussion were compared. Data from the first study indicate that the need for orientation and political gratifications have an effect on discussion of politics mainly through newspaper and television use for political information. Data from the second study indicate a relationship between need for orientation and discussion of politics, regardless of patterns of media use and expected political gratifications. Together, the studies indicate that both need for orientation and individual political gratifications are important in predicting media use for political information. A literature review, graphs, and references are included. (DF)

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Need for Orientation, Media Uses and Gratifications, and Media Effects

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In the late 1950s and early 1960s, at a time of some disappointment with the results of attempts to measure the short-term effects of mass media campaigns on people, the uses and gratifications approach to mass communication research became popular (Blumler and Katz, 1974; Blumler, 1977). This approach to studying media consumption and media effects, put simply, asks what people do with media rather than what media do to people, although there is evidence that it may be fruitful to combine these questions in a "transactional" model (McLeod and Becker, 1974).

As Blumler (1977) points out, the uses and gratifications approach rests on the assumption that different audience members are oriented in different ways to mass media content, and that these different orientations are systematically related to different social circumstances and roles, different personality dispositions and capacities, different patterns of mass media use, and to different media effects.

From the multitude of studies which can be classified under the uses and gratifications approach, several "standard" gratifications sought from political media content have emerged, as pointed out by Becker (1977). These gratifications were first proposed by Blumler and McQuail (1968) in their study of the uses and influence of television in the British General Election of 1964, and include measures of vote guidance seeking, surveillance of the political environment, excitement seeking, reinforcement seeking, and the utility of political information in

anticipated communications with friends, family, or others.

As Becker (1977) has pointed out, it is difficult to sort out the separate impact of various gratifications on media exposure and media effects because they tend to be correlated with each other, and empirical techniques, such as factor analysis, do not yield consistent clusterings of individual gratifications across different data sets.

Blumler (1977), in considering the lack of theory relating certain gratifications from certain media content with certain effects, touched upon this problem of the impact of separate gratifications in arguing that researchers must consider how audience motivations might be related to both media use and media influence. Blumler (1977, pp. 6-8) suggested three basic audience orientations: Cognitive (surveillance, vote guidance seeking, and reality exploration); diversion (entertainment, excitement); and personal identity (reinforcement, salience of personal experiences).

He hypothesized that: (1) Cognitive motivation will facilitate information gain from a variety of media content; (2) Media consumption for purposes of diversion will favor audience acceptance of stereotypical impressions of real-life situations; and (3) Involvement in media materials for personal identity reasons is likely to promote reinforcement effects.

Blumler's cognitive orientation hypothesis is similar in some respects to one of the hypotheses tested by McCombs and Weaver (1973) and Weaver (1977 a and b) -- that a high level of need for orientation about political matters leads to increased media agenda-setting. If one conceives of the learning of political issue saliences as "information gain," then the two hypotheses

are nearly identical, because need for orientation is clearly a cognitive motivation or, more precisely, a cognitive utilitarian motivation.

The primary research question addressed in this paper is whether the general cognitive motive of need for orientation is a better predictor of media use, media effects, and media use-media effects relationships than are individual gratifications, or whether there is an explanatory advantage to considering individual gratifications in conjunction with need for orientation.

Need For Orientation

In terms of psychological theories of motivation, the idea of a need for orientation is derived primarily from cognitive utilitarian theories (McGuire, 1974), especially Tolman's (1932) theory of cognitive mapping. As McGuire puts it, "these 'utilitarian theories' view the individual as a problem solver who approaches any situation as an opportunity to acquire useful information or new skills for coping with life's challenges." (p. 181)

Utilitarian theories of motivation also depict the individual as viewing the outside world, and communications from it, as a valuable source of helpful and relevant information. From this point of view of the person as a problem solver, McGuire argues that mass communications offer a wide range of gratifications in the form of content that is perceived as instructive regarding how to live, how to manage, what is happening, and what it means.

While it may be argued that initial exposure to political information in the mass media may be rather haphazard and controlled by external circumstances, it is difficult to argue that sustained and regular exposure, especially from printed media where most effort is required, is independent of personal motives and gratifications.

Although there are at least seven other kinds of cognitive theories of motivation (consistency, attribution, categorization,

objectification, autonomy, stimulation, teleological) and eight affective theories of motivation (tension-reduction, expressive, ego-defensive, reinforcement, assertion, affiliation, identification, modeling) as outlined by McGuire, the utilitarian theories seem particularly appropriate for explaining political information seeking and cognitive effects because these theories emphasize the role of information in problem-solving. And political campaigns, with their demands for participation and allocation of power through voting decisions, can be viewed as collective problem-solving activities.

One of the earliest proponents of a utilitarian theory of motivation, E.C. Tolman (1932), argued that each person strives to "map" his world, to become familiar with his surroundings (both physical and cognitive) and to fill in enough detail to orient himself.

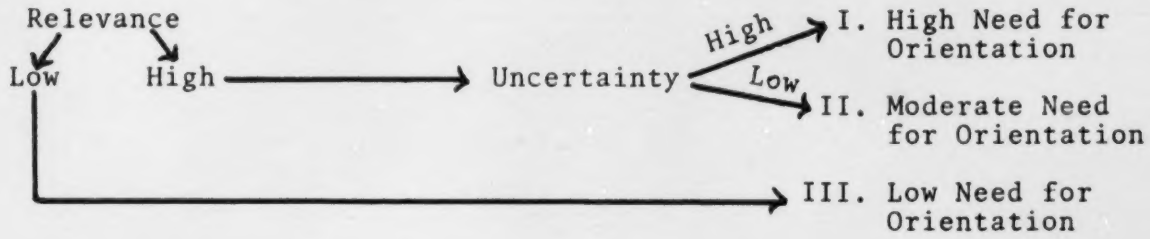
From Tolman's concept of cognitive mapping, from the writings of other utilitarian theorists such as Jones and Gerard (1967) and Berlyne (1960), and from various information-seeking studies (Westley and Barrow, 1959; Hawkins and Lanzetta, 1965; Lanzetta and Driscoll, 1968; Chaffee et al., 1969; Donohew and Tipton, 1973; Chaffee and McLeod, 1973; and Atkin, 1973), McCombs and Weaver (1973) defined political need for orientation in terms of two lower-order (less abstract) concepts: political relevance and political uncertainty.

Because the news media (newspapers and television, in particular) permeate nearly every aspect of American life and are readily available for most citizens, the third major factor

suggested by these studies of information seeking (degree of effort required to receive the message) was considered as a constant, although it can be argued that newspapers and other printed media require more physical and mental effort than do television and other electronic media.

In earlier studies of need for orientation, the following typology was used to define three different levels of need for orientation:

Antecedents of Need for Orientation



In this typology, it is suggested that low relevance (regardless of degree of uncertainty) results in a low need for orientation (Group III), that high relevance and low uncertainty result in a moderate need for orientation (Group II), and that high relevance and high uncertainty result in a high need for orientation (Group I.)

This reasoning was based largely on the assumption that relevance is a necessary condition for uncertainty. This assumption has been questioned by several scholars, however, and by this writer himself since its introduction in the McCombs and Weaver (1973) paper. Perhaps it is more realistic to argue that relevance of political information and uncertainty regarding politics are factors which are reciprocally related to each other -- that is, one leads to another and vice versa.

This interpretation receives some support form the synchronous and time-lagged correlations in Table 1, which indicate not only that political relevance and uncertainty tend to be negatively related to each other, but also that in some cases increased relevance seems to lead to less uncertainty and in some cases higher levels of uncertainty seem to lead to lower levels of relevance.[1] (See Table 1)

Table 1 About Here

Following this argument, different levels of need for orientation are defined in terms of relevance and uncertainty in this study as follows:

Relevance \ Uncertainty	Low	High
Low	Low Need for Orientation (Group III)	Moderate Need for Orientation (Group II)
High	Moderate Need for Orientation (Group II)	High Need for Orientation (Group I)

In this typology, a high level of interest in the subject of a message (e.g., campaign information) coupled with a high level of uncertainty regarding this subject (e.g., which political party or candidate to support) produces a strong need for orientation. Either high interest and low uncertainty, or low interest and high uncertainty, produces a moderate level of need for orientation.

Finally, low interest coupled with a low level of uncertainty (or a high level of certainty) produces a weak need for orientation.

Although levels of relevance and uncertainty could be considered individual predictors of political information seeking and mass media effects, there are some theoretical and methodological advantages to combining both variables into a single hypothetical construct of need for orientation.

Utilitarian theories of human motivation are concerned both with environmental problems or challenges and with growth of an individual's cognitive state through helpful, relevant information. By combining uncertainty (the perceived existence of a problem) with relevance (the perceived importance of the problem), one is tapping the major aspects of many utilitarian theories of motivation in a single fairly abstract concept which may be applied to a wide variety of settings.

Methodologically, it is easier and more parsimonious to deal with one variable than with several, especially when partitioning a sample to observe media use-media effect relationships, or media gratifications-media use relationships.

Need for Orientation and Uses and Gratifications

Earlier studies (Westley and Barrow, 1959; McCombs, 1967; Mueller, 1970; McCombs and Weaver, 1973; Weaver, McCombs and Spellman, 1975; and Weaver, 1977 a and b) have suggested that higher levels of need for orientation are associated with increased effectiveness of editorial endorsements in selected California

elections, with increased use of mass media for political information, and with increased aggregate agenda-setting effects of newspapers and, to a lesser extent, television.

It is not clear, however, whether there is any systematic relationship between a person's need for orientation and the kind of gratifications sought from media content, or whether the relationships between media gratifications and media uses are affected by a person's need for orientation.

If cognitive motivation does facilitate information gain from mass media, as Blumler has hypothesized, then higher levels of need for orientation should be associated with those individual gratifications which emphasize information rather than diversion, entertainment, or excitement (such as judging what political candidates are like, helping one to make up one's mind how to vote, seeing how the candidates stand on issues, and generally keeping informed).

Need for orientation should also be positively related to amount of media use for political information, and to cognitive effects of mass media such as agenda-setting. And, indeed, several previous studies have suggested that there are positive correlations between need for orientation about politics, media use for political information, and aggregate media agenda-setting effects. (See, for example, McCombs and Weaver, 1973; Weaver, McCombs and Spellman, 1975; and Weaver, 1977a and 1977b).

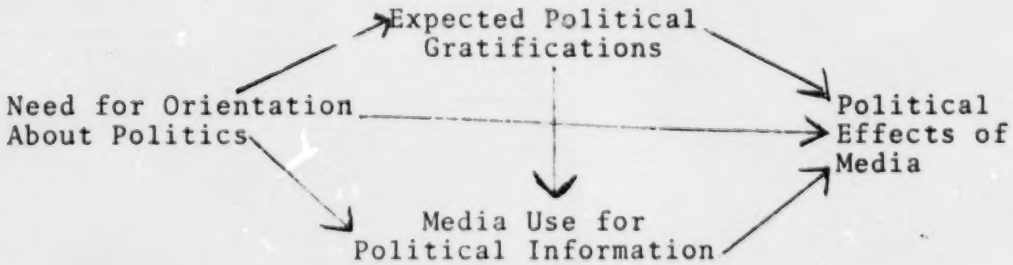
The question remains, however, as to whether a general cognitive motivation such as need for orientation is a better predictor of media use and media effects than are individual

gratifications, or whether there is an explanatory advantage to considering individual gratifications in conjunction with need for orientation in trying to predict media use patterns and media effects.

Causal Modeling and Contingent Conditions: Two Approaches to Predicting Media Effects

Does a general need for orientation about politics lead to certain expected political gratifications from media content, which then lead to certain patterns of media use for political information and to certain political effects? Or, do differing levels of need for orientation about politics lead directly to certain patterns of media use for political information which are associated with certain political effects, regardless of expected political gratifications? Or, finally, do differing levels of need for orientation about politics lead directly to certain political media effects, irrespective of patterns of media use for political information and expected political gratifications?

The above questions can be expressed in the form of a structural model as follows:


Expected Political Gratifications
Need for Orientation About Politics
Political Effects of Media
Media Use for Political Information

Estimation of the parameters of this model with multiple regression analysis should provide some clues as to which pattern of influence is most probable, given different expected political gratifications and different kinds of media use for political information (e.g., newspaper reading vs. television viewing). This approach to sorting out the relationships between need for orientation, media uses and gratifications, and media effects can be called the causal modeling, or structural modeling approach, which generally assumes linear relationships between variables and recursive (one-way) causal effects.

Another way of looking at the influence of need for orientation and media gratifications on media use and media effects, without assuming linear relationships and recursive effects, is to employ the contingent conditions approach, where both need for orientation and individual gratifications are looked on "as the contingent conditions that determine what effects, if any, that media exposure will have on a person" (Chaffee, 1973).

In using the contingent conditions approach, each person is classified according to which political gratifications he or she expects from media content, and his or her level of need for orientation about politics. For each such group of persons, the relationship between use of mass media for political information and media effects is observed, leading to conclusions about the influence of need for orientation and individual

gratifications on the effects that exposure to media is likely to have.

In other words, using this approach it is possible to say that for persons with a low need for orientation who use newspapers to judge political candidates, increased newspaper use is positively (or negatively, or not--depending on the results) correlated with media agenda-setting (or whatever the media effect being studied). Thus, the contingent conditions approach permits more precise statements of when media exposure is likely to lead to certain media effects.

Method

This paper uses data from two studies--one conducted in Syracuse, N.Y., in the fall of 1974 by Professor Lee Becker and others, and one conducted during the entire 1976 presidential campaign year--to compare the causal modeling approach and the contingent conditions approach to studying the relationships between need for orientation, media uses and gratifications and media effects.

In the Syracuse study, which was generously provided by Professor Becker, 339 personal interviews with a probability sample of registered voters were conducted during the congressional election in 1974 (see Becker, 1976). Measures of gratifications and avoidances were included separately for television and newspapers, along with measures of newspaper and television use for political information, political party identification, interest in politics and the congressional campaign, and frequency of discussion of politics, to mention just a few of the variables most relevant to this study.

In the 1976 election study, a panel of about 45 registered voters in each of three diverse communities was recruited in January of 1976. These panels were purposively chosen from larger random samples of registered voters according to level of political interest and use of newspapers and television for political information. By combining two levels of political interest (low and high) with three kinds of media use for political information (low TV, high newspaper/low newspaper, high TV/high newspaper, high TV), a six-celled typology was created which contained from 20 to 25 voters in each cell.

The panel members were interviewed in February, March, May, July, August, September, October and November of 1976, and again in January of 1977, a total of nine interviews. All of the interviews except the July wave were conducted by telephone. July interviews were done face-to-face to permit reactions to various scales, and this paper relies only on this July data. Interviewers attempted to gain unusual rapport with the panel members to facilitate the gathering of unanticipated reactions to the campaign.

These interviews were conducted with voters in Evanston, Illinois, a suburban Chicago community; metropolitan Indianapolis, Indiana; and Lebanon, New Hampshire, a small New England town. The probability samples from which panel members were recruited were designed to overrepresent those in the three communities who usually followed political campaigns either in their newspapers or on television. Those not using newspapers or television for political information were systematically eliminated from the panel.

The median age of panel members was in the 30s. About 40% were college graduates, and about half of those working outside the home had jobs traditionally classified as white collar. And 47% of the panel members were female.

The data from respondents in the three communities were supplemented by content analyses of the two Indianapolis newspapers (the Star and the News), a major Chicago paper (the Tribune), the Lebanon daily newspaper, and the three television network nightly news broadcasts (ABC, CBS, NBC) for the entire year of 1976. In addition to date, page location, size of story (or time devoted to it) and other descriptive variables, each newspaper article or television story was coded into one, two, or three of 73 subject matter categories and into one, two, or three of 65 issue categories.[2]

Measures of need for orientation about politics, political media gratifications, media use for political information, and frequency of discussion of politics were included in both the 1974 Syracuse study and the 1976 election study, making possible a comparison of the relationships between these variables at two points in time and across several different geographic locations.[3]

Findings

Causal Modeling Approach.

Looking first at Tables 2 and 3, which contain data for testing the structural model approach to media effects from the 1976 election study and the 1974 Syracuse study, it is apparent

that there are no clear-cut answers to the questions posed earlier regarding the relationships among need for orientation, political gratifications, media use and the specific media effect, frequency of discussion of politics. (See Tables 2 and 3)

In the 1976 election study (Table 2), the various individual political gratifications are very weak or negative predictors of frequency of discussion of politics (path "e"), regardless of whether newspaper use or television use for political information is included in the model. Need for orientation about politics is a stronger predictor of discussion of politics than any of the individual gratifications (path "d"). The strongest predictor of discussion of politics, however, is frequency of newspaper use for political information, regardless of which gratifications are included in the model (path "f"). Television use for political information is nearly as weak a predictor as the individual gratifications, suggesting a somewhat different role for newspaper and television use in inspiring (or resulting from) the discussion of politics.

Tables 2 and 3 About Here

The remaining paths in Table 2 ("a," "b," and "c") are generally weak or negative, suggesting that need for orientation does not have much impact on either newspaper use for political information or specific political gratifications, but instead relates directly to discussion of politics (path "d"). In addition, the individual political gratifications don't have much

impact, if any, on newspaper use for political information (path "c"), but do appear to have some impact on frequency of television use for political information (especially the surveillance gratification).

As a whole, however, the results from the 1976 election study do not support the idea that need for orientation about politics leads to frequency of discussion about politics through certain gratifications or through patterns of media use for political information. Instead, the data seem to suggest that need for orientation leads directly to this particular media effect (discussion of politics), irrespective of patterns of media use and expected political gratifications. These data also suggest that newspaper use for political information has a direct positive impact on discussion of politics, regardless of level of need for orientation or expected political gratifications.

The data from the 1974 Syracuse study present a somewhat different picture of the relationships among these variables (Table 3). Several political gratifications are stronger predictors of discussion of politics (path "e") than are media use for political information (path "f") and need for orientation (path "d"), but this is mainly because of the discussion gratification which is naturally a better predictor of frequency of discussion of politics than the other gratifications. (See Table 3) In general, though, need for orientation, media use and the individual gratifications are more equal in strength as predictors of discussion of politics in the 1974 data than in the 1976 data.

The remaining path coefficients in Table 3 suggest that need for orientation does have a positive impact on both newspaper and television use for political information (path "b"), but not as strong or consistent an effect on individual political gratifications (path "a"). Individual political gratifications, especially surveillance, discussion, and picking of election winners, have a positive impact on media use for political information (path "c").

Overall, then, the 1974 Syracuse data suggest that need for orientation and political gratifications have an effect on discussion of politics mainly through newspaper and television use for political information. Some of the individual political gratifications (such as discussion) also have a direct effect on discussion of politics.

Taken together, the findings from the two studies suggest that there is value in considering both need for orientation and individual political gratifications in trying to predict media use for political information and the specific media effect, discussion of politics. In the 1976 election study, the political gratifications are much less important as predictors of this media effect than is need for orientation, but in the 1974 study, political gratifications (especially the discussion gratification) are slightly better predictors of the media effect than is need for orientation and slightly weaker predictors of media use.

In sum, the causal model approach to predicting media effects suggests that both need for orientation and individual political gratifications have a separate contribution to make, with the

combined results from both studies somewhat favoring need for orientation as a predictor of the specific media effect, discussion of politics.

Contingent Conditions Approach.

Tables 4 and 5 contain the correlations between newspaper and television use for political information and frequency of political discussion, controlling for levels of need for orientation and salience of individual political gratifications simultaneously (in the body of each table), controlling for need for orientation and political gratifications separately (in the row and column "totals" of each table), and not controlling for either need for orientation or political gratifications (in the intersection of the row and column totals of each table).

Tables 4 and 5 About Here

As in the causal modeling approach, the primary research question being investigated here is whether there is any advantage to employing both need for orientation and political gratifications, in addition to media exposure, in trying to predict media effects. In the causal modeling approach, the media effect was operationally defined as frequency of discussion of politics. In the contingent conditions approach, the media effect is defined as the correlation between frequency of media use (newspapers and television) for political information and frequency of discussion of politics.

Although comparisons of the zero-order correlations with the other correlations in Table 4 are hindered by the absence of several gamma coefficients (because of too few cases for calculation) and low numbers of cases in some of the other cells, it is possible to compare the marginal correlations and some of the table correlations with the zero-order correlations.

Looking first at the column marginal correlations, it appears that frequency of newspaper use is more closely associated with frequency of discussion of politics for those persons with a moderate need for orientation in both the 1974 and the 1976 data sets (see Tables 4 and 5). In the 1976 study, television use is most strongly correlated with discussion of politics for those persons with a high need for orientation (Table 4), but in the 1974 study, a moderate need for orientation results in the strongest correlation between media use and political discussion.

It is apparent in both studies, however, that differing levels of need for orientation do have substantial effects on the media use-media effects relationships. This can be seen by comparing the column total correlations for both newspaper and television use with the total (zero-order) correlations.

Turning to the row total correlations, it is apparent that the saliences of individual political gratifications also have effects on media use-media effects correlations. These effects appear to be more drastic in the 1976 study (Table 4) than in the 1974 study (Table 5), but this may be partly due to the very small numbers of cases in some of the 1976 gratification categories.

In 1976, turning to newspapers for surveillance and for no particular reason increases the likelihood that more frequent newspaper use for political information will be associated with more frequent political discussion. In 1974, turning to newspapers for surveillance and to judge political candidates increases the strength of the correlation between newspaper use and political discussion. Turning to television for no particular reason in 1976, and for reinforcement and picking election winners in 1974, increases the correlations between television use and political discussion.

Considering both sets of marginal data, need for orientation appears to have somewhat more impact on the media use-media effects correlations than do the individual political gratifications.

Looking inside Tables 4 and 5, however, it is difficult to tell if there is more variation among correlations within columns (indicating a greater impact of individual political gratifications) or if there is more variation among correlations within rows (indicating a greater impact of need for orientation). It appears in Table 4 that there is somewhat more variation within columns, suggesting more of an impact of political gratifications, but this may be due to the very small numbers of cases in the specific gratification categories. In Table 5, where the number of cases in each cell is greater, there appears to be somewhat more variation in correlations within rows, suggesting a greater impact of need for orientation.

Regardless of whether need for orientation or the individual gratifications have more effect on the media use-media effects

correlations, it is apparent that neither of these conditions should be completely overlooked in media effects analysis. There are some very interesting effects produced by the combination of these conditions which would not be evident from controlling for only one of them at a time.

For example, persons who turn to newspapers for surveillance of the political environment are generally apt to discuss politics more frequently as they read newspapers more frequently (see Tables 4 and 5). When these persons are divided into three groups based on levels of need for orientation, however, it is clear that newspaper use for political information is not a strong predictor of discussion of politics for those with low levels of need for orientation, perhaps because they have made up their minds about which party or candidate to support and have little interest in the election campaign.

Discussion

So far, this analysis of data from two political campaign studies, using the causal modeling approach and the contingent conditions approach, suggests that need for orientation about politics and individual political gratifications have independent

contributions to make in predicting media (newspaper and television) use for political information, a specific media effect (discussion of politics), and the relationship between media exposure and this media effect.

The combined results of both studies slightly favor need for orientation as a predictor of media effects and media use-media effects correlations, but the overall conclusion is that both need for orientation and individual political gratifications are useful, in conjunction with media exposure, in predicting media effects. This conclusion is partly consistent with Becker's (1976) study which employed data from the 1974 Syracuse study and from a 1973 Madison, Wisconsin, study. Using increases in multiple correlation coefficients as a measure of predictive utility of gratification variables, Becker concluded that the analyses from both studies offered "some support for the inclusion of gratification variables in effects analysis." (p. 33)

If need for orientation is accepted as a measure of a general cognitive orientation, then perhaps one reason that this study finds that the various individual political gratifications make an independent contribution to predicting the media effect is because these gratifications are based on orientations other than cognitive--such as diversion and personal identity, which were suggested by Blumler (1977)--and because the specific effect examined (frequency of discussion of politics) is not a purely cognitive one (or at least not as clearly cognitive as, say, learning of candidate issue stands).

Returning to Tables 2-5 and looking only at the rows for the surveillance gratification, it is clear that need for orientation is a better predictor of the media effect in Tables 2 and 3 than is the surveillance gratification (path "d" versus path "e"). In addition, Tables 4 and 5 suggest that the

influence of the surveillance gratification is much less than the influence of differing levels of need for orientation on changes in the correlations between media use and the media effect. The correlations in the surveillance row of both tables closely mirror the correlations in the column (need for orientation) total row, suggesting that the differing levels of need for orientation are producing the changes from the zero-order correlations. This conclusion is also supported by comparing the surveillance total correlations with the zero-order correlations in each table.

Furthermore, these conclusions are supported in similar analyses with two additional media effects--the rank-order correlation between each person's intrapersonal ranking of four political issues and his or her newspaper's emphasis ranking of these issues in the 1976 election study (individual agenda scores), and a measure of political knowledge in the 1974 Syracuse study.[4]

In the 1976 study path analyses, need for orientation was a stronger predictor of individual agenda scores than any of the individual political gratifications, especially the combined surveillance gratification measure (.18 versus .08 for both newspaper and TV use). Need for orientation also appeared to have more influence on the media exposure-agenda score correlations than did the surveillance gratification.

In the 1974 Syracuse study path analyses, need for orientation was a stronger predictor of political knowledge than any of the individual political gratifications (for both newspapers and TV), especially the surveillance gratification (.25 versus -.06 for newspapers, and .19 versus .00 for TV). And, need for orientation had more influence on the media exposure-political knowledge correlations than did the surveillance gratification measure.

Thus, when a more general measure of cognitive orientation (need for orientation) is compared to a more specific cognitive gratification (surveillance), the more general measure appears to be a better predictor of the media effects of political discussion, individual agenda scores, and political knowledge. And the more general measure appears to have more influence as a contingent condition on the media use-media effect relationships than does the specific gratification measure.

This finding tends to support Blumler's (1977) proposal that we need to turn to basic audience orientations to predict and explain media influence processes. If measures of a general diversion orientation and a general personal identity orientation had been matched against the more specific diversion and reinforcement gratification measures in this study, perhaps the results would parallel those found for need for orientation and the surveillance gratification measure.

That is, perhaps the more general measures of diversion orientation and personal identity orientation would have been better predictors of the media effect than the more specific gratification measures, and would have had more impact as contingent conditions on the media exposure-media effect relationships.

All this is, of course, speculation, but perhaps future studies of media uses and effects should move toward more general measures of audience motives and away from the more specific gratification measures which have been employed in past uses and gratifications studies. Development of more general measures of motives would be more parsimonious from both a theoretical and methodological point of view, and such general measures might be more easily standardized across different studies to provide more comparable findings.

Construction of such general measures of diversion orientation and personal identity orientation might follow the reasoning used in constructing the measure of need for orientation used in this study. That is, such measures might be more inferred than direct. Instead of asking people directly if they use media for entertainment or reinforcement, one might ask how often a person agreed with a particular kind of article or program, or how relaxed a person felt while using a specific medium or a specific kind of media content.

Such a strategy might not only produce more general measures of various motives, but might also avoid some of the social desirability problems associated with more specific gratification measures and the methodological problems involved in trying to reduce specific gratification measures to consistent clusters via factor analysis.

Notes

[1]The wording of the political relevance measure throughout the 1976 election study was: "At this time, how interested are you in the presidential campaign?" and the response categories were "very interested, somewhat interested, and not at all interested."

The wording of the political uncertainty measure was: "Which one of these statements best describes how you feel right now about voting for President in November?

1. I definitely will vote for the Democratic candidate for President.

2. I probably will vote for the Democratic candidate for President.

3. I probably will vote for the Republican candidate for President.

4. I definitely will vote for the Republican candidate for President.

5. I don't know which party I will vote for.

6. I probably will not vote for President."

Respondents were considered to have a "high" level of uncertainty about politics if they agreed to statements 2, 3, or 5, and a "low" level of uncertainty about politics if they agreed to statements 1 or 4. Those few respondents saying they probably would not vote were not included in the analysis.

[2]This coding was carried out by graduate students who were trained for several weeks in the use of this system of categories. The individual newspaper story was the unit of analysis, and each story was coded into at least one subject matter and issue category. Additional categories (up to three) were used if coders decided that a story equally emphasized more than one issue or was about more than one subject.

[3]The wording for the measure of newspaper use for political information in the 1976 election study was:

> "During the past month how much did you use the newspaper for news about political issues and events?"
>
> (Not at all, very little, some, a great deal)

The wording for the measure of newspaper use for political information in the 1974 Syracuse study was:

"Most people don't have time to read the whole newspaper. When you do read a newspaper and come across the following kinds of stories, how often do you read them? Would you say you read them frequently, sometimes, rarely, or never?" (Stories about local and state government and politics)

The wording for the measure of television use for political information in the 1974 Syracuse study was:

"People have told us they haven't paid much attention to the current political campaigns for U.S. Senator, Congressman, Governor and other state officers. How much attention have you been paying to television accounts of these races? Would you say you've paid close attention, some attention, little attention, or no attention to these television accounts?"

For the wording of the need for orientation measure in the 1976 election study, see footnote 1. The wording of the political relevance measure in the 1974 Syracuse study was:

"How interested have you been in the current campaign for U.S. Senator, Congressman, Governor and other state officers? Would you say very interested, somewhat interested, slightly interested, or not at all interested?"

The wording of the political uncertainty measure in the 1974 Syracuse study was:

"Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, or what?"

1. Liberal 2. Democrat 3. Independent, No Preference

4. Republican 5. Conservative 6. Other Party _____

Those respondents answering 1, 2, 4, 5, or 6 were considered to have a "low" level of uncertainty; those answering 3 were considered to have a "high" level of uncertainty.

The wording of the individual political gratification measures in the 1976 election study was:

"I'm going to read you a list of reasons some people have given for reading newspaper stories and watching television broadcasts that deal with political candidates and events. Please tell me to what extent each of the reasons explains your reading or viewing in the last four weeks." (A lot, A little, Not at all)

1. To judge what political candidates are like.
2. To help me make up my mind how to vote in an election.
3. To remind me of my candidates' strong points.
4. To give me something to talk about with other people.
5. To keep informed.
6. To enjoy the excitement of an election race.
7. To see how the candidates stand on the issues.
8. To relax and get away from it all.
9. No particular reason. Sometimes they just catch my eye.

These gratifications were subjected to a PA2 factor analysis (SPSS program) with Varimax rotation and five factors specified to check for groupings of responses. Gratifications 1, 2, 5, and 7 loaded highly on one factor, which was labeled "Surveillance." Gratifications 3 and 4 also loaded highly on one factor, which was labeled "Reinforcement." Gratification 6 was labeled "Excitement," gratification 8 was labeled "Relaxation," and gratification 9 was labeled "No Reason." In the contingent conditions analysis, high salience of a gratification was indicated by the answer, "A lot," to the question, "Please tell me to what extent each of the reasons explains your reading or viewing in the last four weeks."

The wording of the newspaper and television political gratifications in the 1974 Syracuse study was:

"I'm going to read you a list of reasons some people have given for reading newspaper stories (watching television programs) that deal with political candidates and events. For each reason that I read, please tell me whether it applies to you a lot, a little, or not at all."

1. To judge what political candidates are like.
2. To judge which candidates are likely to win an election.
3. To help me make up my mind how to vote in an election.
4. To remind me of my candidates' strong points.
5. To give me something to talk about with other people.
6. To see what the candidates would do if elected.
7. To enjoy the excitement of an election race.
8. To see how the candidates stand on the issues.
9. To read (see) editorials and commentary about the elections that agree with my positions.
10. To use what I learn in political discussions.

These separate gratification measures were subjected to a PA2 factor analysis (SPSS program) with Varimax rotation and five factors specified, for newspapers and television separately to check for groupings of responses. For newspapers, gratifications 3, 4, 6, and 8 loaded highly on one factor, which was labeled "Surveillance." Gratifications 5, 9, and 10 loaded

highly on one factor, which was labeled "Discussion." Gratification 1 was labeled "Judgment of Candidates," gratification 2 was labeled "Picking of Winners," and gratification 7 was labeled "Excitement."

For television, the groupings were the same, except that gratification 1 loaded with the "Surveillance" factor and gratification 9 did not load with the "Discussion" factor. Gratification 9 was labeled "Reinforcement." As with the 1976 study, high salience of a gratification was indicated by the answer, "A lot," to the question of whether each gratification applied to a person.

The wording of the discussion of politics (media effect) measure in the 1976 election study was:

"How often do you talk with others about political issues and events?" (occasionally, several times a week, nearly everyday/everyday)

The wording of the political discussion measure in the 1974 Syracuse study was:

"How frequently do you talk with your friends about politics? Would you say frequently, sometimes, rarely or never?"

[4]The wording for the individual issue rankings in the 1976 election study was:

> "Now I would like to get your opinion on the relative importance of some of these issues. I will name two issues at a time. As I name each pair, please tell me which one you personally think is the most important issue in the Presidential campaign."

The issues paired in September 1976 were unemployment, inflation, federal spending, and quality of national leadership. The September measure of issue salience was used with July measures of need for orientation, media use for political information and political gratifications because previous agenda-setting studies (especially McCombs, Becker, and Weaver, 1975) have found a two- to four-month time lag for the strongest correlations between media and audience rankings of issues.

The political knowledge measure in the 1974 Syracuse study was created by summing the answers to six questions about the Watergate issue:

1. Do you know the name of the judge who sentenced the Watergate burglars?
2. Who was Alexander Butterfield?
3. Who is Peter Rodino?
4. When did the Watergate burglary occur?
5. Who was the first special Watergate prosecutor?
6. Who is the present special Watergate prosecutor?

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Addendum:

McCombs, Maxwell E., Lee B. Becker, and David H. Weaver (1975) "Measuring the Cumulative Agenda-Setting Influence of the Mass Media." Invited paper presented at the annual convention of the Speech Communication Association, Houston, Texas.

Table 1

Correlations (Gammas) Between
Measures of Political Relevance and Uncertainty[a]
(1976 Election data)

	Feb.	May	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
Feb. Relevance ⟶ Uncertainty in:	-.01[b]	.04	.04	-.40[c]	-.41	-.08
Feb. Uncertainty ⟶ Relevance in:	-.01	-.13	-.27	-.01	.06	-.14
May Relevance ⟶ Uncertainty in:		-.25	-.11	-.52	-.34	-.20
May Uncertainty ⟶ Relevance in:		-.25	-.45	-.59	-.47	-.39
July Relevance ⟶ Uncertainty in:			-.22	-.57	-.61	-.55
July Uncertainty ⟶ Relevance in:			-.22	-.15	-.04	-.13
Aug. Relevance ⟶ Uncertainty in:				-.61	-.58	-.45
Aug. Uncertainty ⟶ Relevance in:				-.61	-.39	-.53
Sept. Relevance ⟶ Uncertainty in:					-.50	-.17
Sept. Uncertainty ⟶ Relevance in:					-.50	-.37
Oct. Relevance ⟶ Uncertainty in:						-.27
Oct. Uncertainty ⟶ Relevance in:						-.27

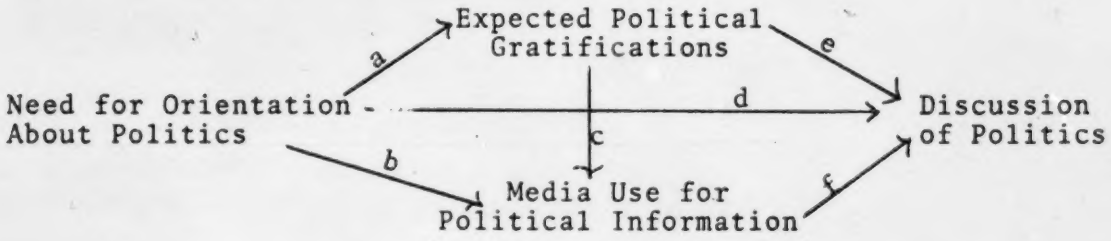
[a] For exact wording of the measures of political relevance and uncertainty, see footnote 1.

[b] These Gamma coefficients are based on an n of about 120 cases. The number of cases varies slightly for each coefficient because pairwise deletion of missing values was used.

[c] The underlined coefficients indicate those gammas which are clearly larger than the the gammas for the reverse relationships. For example, the measure of political relevance in February is clearly more strongly associated with the measure of political uncertainty in August (-.40) than uncertainty in February is associated with relevance in August (-.01), suggesting that relevance in February leads to uncertainty in August, rather than vice versa. In general, these correlations suggest a reciprocal, rather than a one-way, relationship between political relevance and political uncertainty during the 1976 election year.

Table 2

Path Analyses of the Relationships between Need for Orientation, Various Political Gratifications, Newspaper and Television Use for Political Information, and Frequency of Discussion of Politics (1976 Election Study data) (n=130)



Political Gratifications[c]	Paths (newspaper use for political information) a	b	c	d	e	f
Surveillance	.07[a]	.02	.01	.19	.03	.26
Reinforcement	-.05	.03	.03	.20	-.02	.26
Excitement	.12	.02	.04	.19	.06	.26
Relaxation	-.07	.02	-.11	.19	-.04	.25
No Reason	-.16	-.00	-.16	.17	-.18	.26

Political Gratifications	Paths (TV use for political information) a	b	c	d	e	f
Surveillance	.07[b]	.11	.23	.19	.02	.06
Reinforcement	-.05	.13	.09	.19	-.02	.07
Excitement	-.16	.11	.10	.19	.07	.06
Relaxation	.12	.13	.11	.19	-.08	.08
No Reason	-.07	.11	-.08	.17	-.18	.05

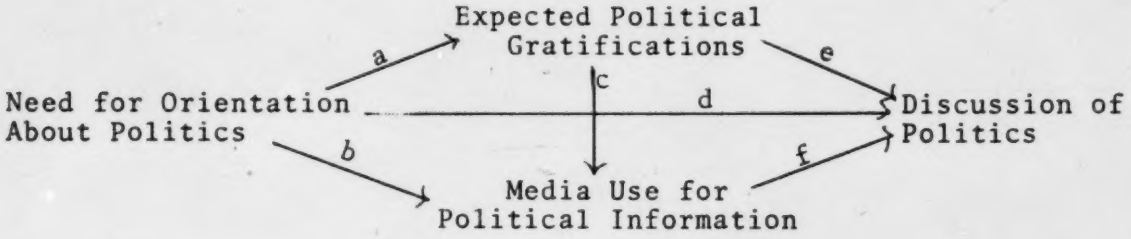
[a]Indicates the standardized regression coefficient (beta) for path "a" (between need for orientation and a combined surveillance gratification measure) in a model including a measure of newspaper use for political information.

[b]Indicates the beta coefficient for path "a" (between need for orientation and a combined surveillance gratification measure) in a model including a measure of television use for political information.

[c]For exact wording of these and other measures, see footnotes 1 and 3.

Table 3

Path Analyses of the Relationships between Need for Orientation, Various Political Gratifications, Newspaper and Television Use for Political Information, and Frequency of Discussion of Politics (1974 Syracuse data) (n=339)



Newspaper Political Gratifications[c]	Paths (newspaper use for political information) a	b	c	d	e	f
Surveillance	.15[a]	.23	.20	.13	.08	.20
Discussion	.07	.24	.26	.13	.37	.11
Judgment of Candidates	.12	.22	.25	.13	.16	.17
Picking of Winners	.13	.23	.20	.12	.18	.17
Excitement	.11	.24	.17	.13	.12	.19
Television Political Gratifications	**Paths (TV use for political information) a**	**b**	**c**	**d**	**e**	**f**
Surveillance	.17[b]	.21	.36	.13	.11	.16
Discussion	.10	.25	.17	.11	.42	.13
Reinforcement	.09	.25	.16	.13	.15	.18
Picking of Winners	.03	.26	.20	.14	.15	.17
Excitement	.11	.25	.14	.12	.18	.18

[a]Indicates the standardized regression coefficient (beta) for path "a" (between need for orientation and a combined surveillance gratification measure) in a model including a measure of newspaper use for political information.

[b]Indicates the beta coefficient for path "a" (between need for orientation and a combined surveillance gratification measure) in a model including a measure of television use for political information.

[c]For exact wording of these and other measures, see footnotes 1 and 3.

Table 4

Correlations (gammas) between Media Use for Political Information and Frequency of Discussion of Politics, Controlling for Need for Orientation and Various Political Gratifications (1976 Election Study data)

	Need for Orientation							
	Low (n=16)		Moderate (n=66)		High (n=43)		TOTAL (n=128)	
Political Gratifications	Newsp.	TV	Newsp.	TV	Newsp.	TV	Newsp.	TV
Surveillance	.20[a]	-.27[b]	.51	-.20	.21	.58	.39	.11
Reinforcement	-.60	.33	-.26	-.52	.44	.44	-.02	.04
Excitement	1.0	----[c]	.59	-.61	0	.31	.35	-.12
Relaxation	0	0	----	----	----	----	.11	-.08
No Reason	----	----	.60	.60	1.0	1.0	.75	.55
							Zero-order	
TOTAL	.29	.06	.55	-.08	.27	.51	.45	.17

[a]Indicates the correlation (gamma coefficient) between frequency of newspaper use for political information and frequency of discussion of politics for those persons with a low need for orientation who said they used newspapers for surveillance of political events.

[b]Indicates the correlation (gamma coefficient) between frequency of television use for political information and frequency of discussion of politics for those persons with a low need for orientation who said they used television for surveillance of political events.

[c]Indicates that there were not enough cases for computation of gamma.

Table 5

Correlations (gammas) between Media Use for Political Information and Frequency of Discussion of Politics, Controlling for Need for Orientation and Various Political Gratifications (1974 Syracuse data)

	Need for Orientation							
	Low		Moderate		High		TOTAL	
Political Gratifications	Newsp. (n=86)	TV (n=86)	Newsp. (n=194)	TV (n=193)	Newsp. (n=57)	TV (n=57)	Newsp. (n=338)	TV (n=337)
Surveillance	.03[a]	-.00[b]	.47	.30	.42	.27	.39	.27
Discussion	-.52	-.33	.25	.33	.63	-.20	.21	.25
Judgment of Candidates[c]	.22	----	.35	----	.51	----	.38	----
Reinforcement	----	.30	----	.38	----	.13	----	.33
Picking of Winners	-.50	.60	.24	.33	.50	.20	.23	.29
Excitement	-.25	-.16	.24	.29	.43	-.23	.19	.18
							Zero-order	
TOTAL	-.01	.14	.35	.31	.28	.21	.29	.30

[a]Indicates the correlation (gamma coefficient) between frequency of newspaper use for political information and frequency of discussion of politics for those persons with a low need for orientation who said they used newspapers for surveillance of political events.

[b]Indicates the correlation (gamma coefficient) between frequency of television use for political information and frequency of discussion of politics for those persons with a low need for orientation who said they used television for surveillance of political events.

[c]This gratification applies only to newspaper use, and the reinforcement gratification applies only to television use. This is due to the way the separate newspaper and television gratifications grouped when factor analyzed. See footnote 3 for a description of the factor analysis procedure.